

REMARKS

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §103

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider (U.S. Patent No. 5,168,961) in view of Umeda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,010,064).

Claim 1 has been amended in order to more particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter to which the applicant regards as his invention. It is believed that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated **March 31, 2003**.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite such further features that "a set of keys by which a locker number of each of said plurality of lockers are inputted." These features are supported by way of an example in Figure 1, where there is a plurality of lockers 11. The unlocking mechanism is controllable by the same set of keys 12b as illustrated in the logic diagram of Figure 3 and associated written specification. The main emphasis is that the same set of keys 12b is commonly used for all of the plurality of lockers. Memory 22 and CPU 21 as shown in Figure 2 keep track of whether any of the plurality of lockers should be unlocked.

In the primary reference Schneider, as clearly shown in Figure 5, there is a separate and distinct password entry device 415 for each of lockers 425. There is not a set of keys one can use to control a plurality of lockers. In fact, a person must manually or mentally keep track of which one of many lockers her possession has been stored. Namely, that person must remember the locker number as shown by the identification sign 426 so as to know where to return to retrieve her possession.

Independent claim 1 has also been amended to add a feature that the cabinet comprises a calling button. This feature is fully disclose in Figure 1 located in-between reference numerals 12b and 12c of the instant application. This feature is neither disclosed in the primary reference Schneider nor the secondary reference Umeda.

Given such structural differences between the instant application and the asserted prior art, the asserted prior art references, when combined, simply do not disclose or teach "a set of keys by which a locker number of each of said plurality of lockers are inputted" in combination with "a calling button."

Therefore, independent claim 1, as newly amended, is patentably distinguished over the asserted prior art references. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

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Attorney Docket No. 010863

Conclusion

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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